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## BOSTON ARTISTS' STUDIOS.

No. III.

BY FRANK T. ROBINSON.

Q.—“Do the artists of to-day paint any better than the old masters of the middle ages for having such fine studios?”

Writer.—“No.”

Q.—“Then why is there so much talk about the artists' need of draperies and decorations, top lights and such a sight of color varieties?”

W.—“If these are to assist the artists in bettering their work, should you begrudge their demands?”

Q.—“No. But the old masters did not have such ‘swell studios,’ and they painted all round the modern men. I know I am not a writer nor a painter, nor am I a close student of art, yet I have a deep love for the arts, a sort of awakening,

than the *artist* and his works. They enjoy his bric-a-brac, draperies, etc., more than his paintings, and then there is the fashion of the thing to be in with the artist. Of course it is agreeable and pleasing, all this fixing up, and possesses a novel arrangement, but it is my opinion that the artists loaf too much in their color dens and gorge themselves with the silken web of colors rather than with the aggregation and chemical nature of the more solid pigments.”

W.—“These are rather endorsements of decoration than discouragements. Color is a passion, it is emotional, it is a sort of religion to the eye of the artist. The butcher has a glowing red face, but it does not appeal to the artist's eye, it rather suggests the prize ox and the ring bolt. The artist lives on qualities, refinement and grace, a grand air and fine manners, these are his sympathies.”

Q.—“Somebody is likely to pick you up on that.”

W.—“Very well, if it will help to clear a point or assist art in any way, that is what we are here for.”

W.—“Certainly, to both of your questions. ‘Velazquez need not have painted with a brush,’ says Whistler, ‘he could have used his nose, he was so full of color.’”

“But this is going too far into argument. Let us get at the decorative idea. Leonardo's great school of art, the chief glory of Lombardy at the beginning of the Renaissance, did not lack adornments, it was full of artistic and humanistic excellencies. Gems, antiquities, costumes, silks, brocades full of glass threads, tapestries, armor and the like were eagerly sought by these masters. They collected these objects with as much relish as artists of to-day do. Their courts were brilliant with costumes and dignity, poetry was in its golden age, and it is a well known fact that the masters kept up most luxurious establishments. But let us see how Mr. Caliga combines his fabric colors.”

Q.—“That is a charming arrangement in the corner, just the place to think and smoke.”

W.—“It is an agreeable spot. Here is a divan covered with Persian rugs. A buffalo robe is half on the seat and the other half is spread out on



LOOKING TOWARD THE ENTRANCE OF STUDIO SKETCHED BY MR. CALIGA

and have in a way of my own observed that we are producing more students of color than brain painters, ain't we?”

W.—“Yes. The American artists are said to be among the best living colorists. We are growing and the artists are far ahead of the public appreciation and patronage. It is true we are making color students and the brains also, and we have enough of both to supply a bigger market than is ours at present.”

Q.—“I should like to go with you and study the points of decoration in Mr. I. H. Caliga's studio, at No 3 Hamilton Place. Perhaps you may convince me of some of the things you tell me about, and especially of the good it does the public in writing up these studios.”

W.—“Very well, we will go.”

IN THE STUDIO.

W.—“Now, Mr. Querist, here we are. Is not this an agreeable atmosphere?”

Q.—“O yes, but I am convinced now more than ever that the public visit the studios more

“The old masters' studios, in the blooming time of art, were rich in costumes and color, in fact the apparel worn in those warm countries was of itself artistic in form and variety of color. Look at the early Dutch painters, the best that have ever lived or are likely to; how rich their colors are; what fine costumes they had at command; their material grew in front of them; they were born colorists. Later on the demands of the church did not need great contrasting colors, though there are numerous examples of Rembrandt, Leonardo, and all of the famous masters that show they were bound at times to revel in a color conflagration. They painted great frescoes and made tapestry cartoons in which there were many strong colors, also silk and gold.”

Q.—“Very likely, but did not these masters make more of a study of the quality of their pigments, manufacture them, tone them in the sun before using, and thus know their value better than our artists do? You suppose the masters could paint as well and as lasting with Winsor and Newton's colors as they did with their own?”

the polished floor. A Renaissance mirror hangs over head, with a silken Japanese sunshade canopied over it. (See illustration next page.) Silken draperies, ferns, and living vines, as well as other objects of adornment, fill up the corner. You will notice that the artist obtains his strongest light from the great side window on the right. He can grade his light by using that adjustable shade. Let us pick out the best color effects, and we will start from the reception-room. This is lighted by gas which burns dimly. Behind the gas jet on the wall hangs an old Flemish tapestry. It depicts a landscape with a border of fruits and flowers. There is a comfortable seat at the back of the room covered with Bokhara rugs, and over this hangs a full length portrait of a child. A cracked Japanese umbrella-stand completes the furniture and keeps the room simple and in good tone.”

Q.—“Yes. The view through these portières into the studio is pretty good.”

W.—“One moment. These portières are very rich in tone and are not staring. They are cop-



per colored plush, very heavy and quite appropriate as a passage of color to prepare the eye for other effects. That corner you speak of (see illustration) is draped with long gray Madras lace curtains. The palms behind them and the small rice paper screen make a tender and pleasing

Q.—“I like the English ivy festoons over there by the side light.”

W.—“That is a good way of breaking up the long line in the ceiling. Here is a tapestry which Mr. Caliga describes as being an old Bouvais. It is on the left wall and represents Alexander the Great

rich green and gray background and any colors look well against it and show their true values. You will notice that a brownish gray burlap forms a wainscot near the entrance on both sides, and continues on the right where the owl and a bit of drapery hangs. (See illustration preceding page.)



A QUIET CORNER IN I. H. CALIGA'S STUDIO. SKETCHED BY MR. CALIGA.

effect to the eyes. The upright piano fits in at this juncture very well, and so does this German carved chair; it is a good old bit of furniture of which there are several pieces in the room.”

receiving presents from Darius. Figures are very numerous and life size. Some are musicians, others carry fruit and flowers. It is a procession partaking of a festive nature. There is another on the back studio wall of much the same style. It is a

Beyond this juncture, in front of which you see the big oak table, is a set of library shelves curtained with a gray plush; a heavily draped window here finishes the mural fabric decorations.”

Q.—“I like the whole tone of the room. It



seems that, with the exception of the creamy gray ceiling, a brownish gray and green pervade the atmosphere. It is not so lively as I expected to find, though there are many strong pieces of local color. It is not so overloaded with extravagant stuffs as some I have seen."

W.—"You notice the artist paints in a high key, at least his portraits and figures look so in this room. When his works are seen in collections under a strong top light they hold their own beside the strongest colors. The artist knows his own color scheme and what he requires to make his pictures hold their values in other lights, and decorates his studio with that end in view."

Q.—"I see a great many objects in the room that are rather interesting relics, doubtless. Those shelves jutting from the wall are nice places for books, glass, figures and such things."

W.—Yes, they break the long distance from floor to ceiling, and are useful as you say. Here is a nice effect. (See illustration.) It looks accidental but it means more than chance. It is a plaster head of a child. A quiet olive silk scarf gathered at this end nearly encircles the head, then drapes upward and inclines to the left. It has an

to be artistic as far as they went. The Arabs, Turks, Greeks and Oriental peoples were naturally endowed with color, they glow with it."

Q.—"Color then is the basis of art?"

W.—"That is what we are trying to get at. The science of shadows is obtainable only by the study and practice of modeling and the possession of ornamental order coupled with a knowledge of colors and harmonies in draperies. The Japanese are less fettered in color than any other nation. They have no technical rules or transitory fashions. They are subtle, intense, varied, free and truthfully artistic in decorative expressions."

Q.—"I think that is so. Like some writer I may say I have reveled in their delicious coquetries of color."

W.—"There is no better spiritual tonic, depend upon it, than color, be it in painting, speech, or writing. Here is a good piece of decoration. Now, in the sixteenth century the artists were called upon to decorate the brides' chambers, which were usually adorned with mosaics, colored marbles, delicate traceries and tapestries. Now this screen is just what would go well in a bride's chamber. It would stand in front of the entrance of the

wrist. It is a delicate and interesting study and suggests movement in the right place. The room is well supplied with repoussé dishes, delph ware, Venetian glass and other ornaments, not to forget the Renaissance clock with its long chains hanging down." (See illustration.)

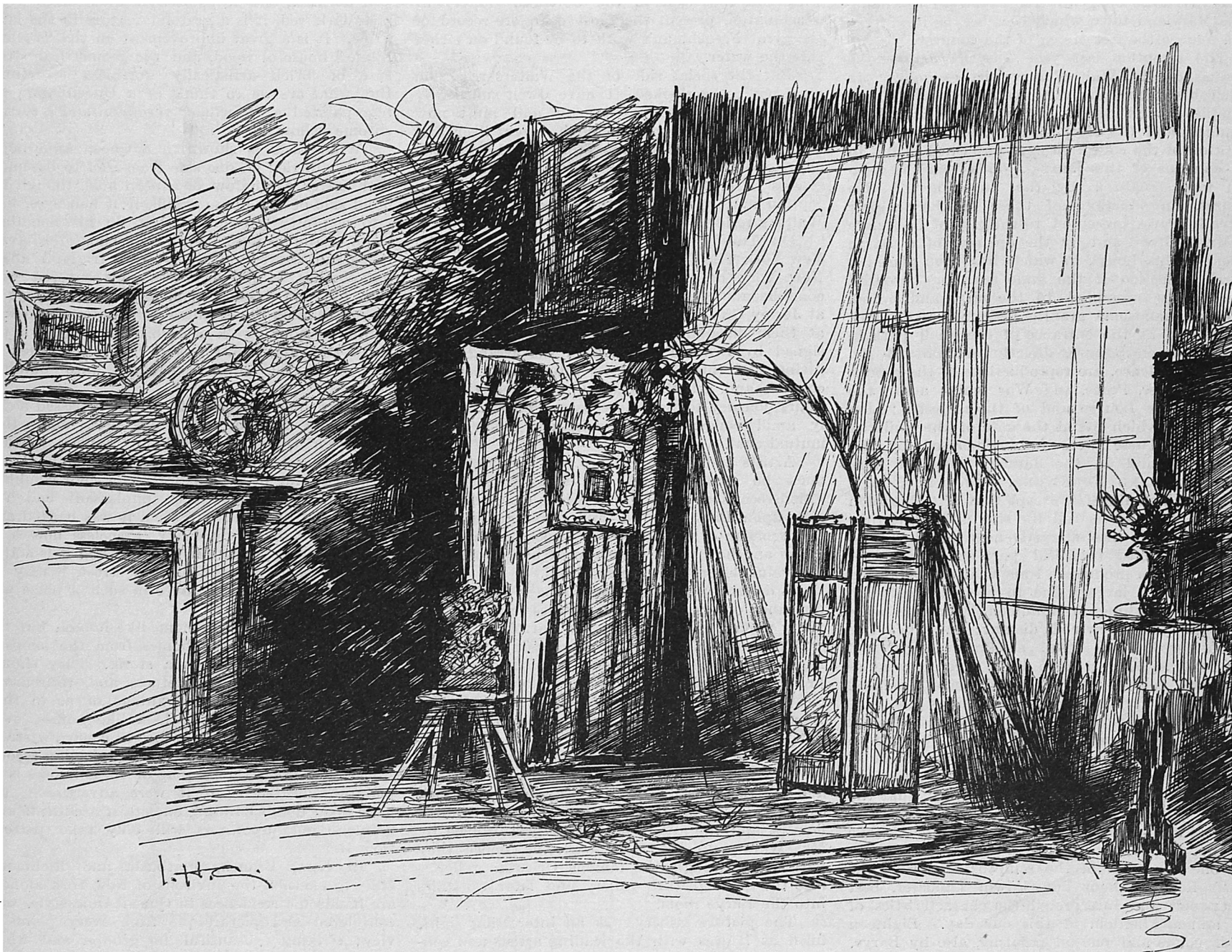
Q.—"I should think the studio would light up well at night?"

W.—"Gas does give it a sentimental effect, it is a good place to write a romance in, for it possesses a religious and intellectual air."

Q.—"My friends who drape by 'rules and regulations' ought to 'take in' a studio now and then."

W.—"Yes, that is so. The store men do not obtain that vitality of color in combination which artists do. The French and English imitate the Oriental rug makers' work with the same success, as if by their will power they could turn out the same artistic rug that the long finger-nailed fellow does who works out his color design as he goes along. The rug you stand on will outlast the million *outputs* of the loom by several centuries."

Q.—"Are there any prospects of another Medici family springing up in our country?"



GENTLE LIGHT EFFECT IN STUDIO. SKETCHED BY MR. CALIGA.

action and looks as if it were to go around the corner. If it were not there you would see the line of the angle."

Q.—"There is reason in this sort of decoration."

W.—"That is the very point we must get at. The artists are educators in decoration, in fact they have always 'set the style,' so to speak. It used to be the court painters who dictated the colors and arrangements of the palaces. Artists are inventors of color combinations by nature and supply the rest of the world with their imaginations. Every person, of whatever nationality, has some degree of the sense of the beautiful, and there never was a time but what that sense was alive. The Venetians used stamped leather for mural decoration when they could not obtain tapestries, and tapestries counted for little beside a fresco or wall painting by some great artist. The Japanese and Chinese use all sorts of colors and combinations for their houses and temples, indeed the native Indians painted skins for their huts and used sun-dried colored clays for ornaments. The geometrical decorations of the Cypriotes and the emblems on their walls were meant

room. The side in view as you enter is composed of dark green and brown French Damask with gold threads interspersed, a sort of tapestry in effect. The other side is draped with a gray Japanese scarf over the top, which hangs gracefully down half way to the sides. A piece of reddish brown silk fills the center and lower half. This hangs in simple folds and is rich and luscious in tint and tone.

"You notice there is nothing in the room of a very white tone that is exposed to the light. A bust of Venus, in plaster, is in the dark corner on the piano top, side of it rests a brass tray and near by is a Ming vase catching the light in silvery spots. These things give life to the shadows."

Q.—"I notice big bunches of maple leaves and such things way up in the corners near the ceiling. Those, I suppose, are put there to fill the holes and shut out the angles from view."

W.—"Quite right. There hangs a Jewish Sabbath lamp, a good piece of old brass work. It looks well with tapestry for a background. See that plaster hand on the tapestry, a piece of brown and gray plush is wrapped around the

W.—"Yes, a grand one. Every word printed in our press adds to the art possibilities of the future, and some sweet and glorious day the American art world will be astonished to hear that a man of great wealth has died and left an ample amount for the establishment of a national school of art."

Q.—"I hope so. Agitation of art in any form then, you believe, helps the general cause?"

W.—"That is just it. We will bid good day to Mr. Caliga and accustom ourselves once more to the rattle of the noisy carts and horses on the pavements, and mingle with the procession of the more exalted of earth's pensioners on the sidewalk."

It does not matter who makes a work of art. Look first at a picture, or a statue, or a piece of magnificent furnishing or decorating, for what is in it? When you have got at its artistic worth it will be time enough for you to ask the maker's name. The reason that merit always has to battle so hard for recognition is that the public only too often take the name for the work, and remain blind to the just claims of the man without a name.